Promotion and Violation of Multiculturalism in the Select Novels of Hari Kunzru, Amit Chaudhuri and Upamanyu Chatterjee

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Introduction:

When the world has been transformed into a small village with the transport facilities available in the post-modern era, when human beings on the earth are curious to know about life on other planets and are eager to communicate with them in the age of social media, it becomes apt to know about and understand the culture of various nations on the earth and to accept them for the sake of promotion of cultural diversity of the world. As we know culture generates and manipulates the society of any nation because culture is about rules and regulations of particular society which are depended on their experiences for a long time. We can possibly explain certain lifestyle, human behaviors of particular society if we thoroughly study their culture. 'Culture is like grammar if society is like language' speaking linguistically. That's why knowing cultures is to know ourselves or human beings on the entire world perfectly because it contains all human traits and tendencies.

As cultures in the world are varying from one another, the world has become multicultural one which is unique thing of human race. Though we are same as human beings a social animal; our different societies behave different, eat different, think (more or less) different, speak different and wear different and therefore become different ethnic groups. Therefore, multiculturalism becomes pool to connect these different societies or poles. Multiculturalism describes the existence, acceptance or promotion of multiple cultural traditions within a single jurisdiction, usually considered in terms of the culture associated with an ethnic group. So, multiculturalism can work as a solution to resolve complex and conflict relations of world nations, when in 21st century the world is becoming a multilingual and multicultural global village. Every country in the world has cultural diversity which reflects in its literary texts. Multiculturalism is not an intellectual discipline but a movement for social change. It is about respect, recognition, tolerance and protection to all cultures and subcultures. Multiculturalism is not merely an issue of academic debate but an invitation to dialogue for social co-operation. It allows and values different ethnic, racial, cultural, gender identities to mingle in one another for development of respect and co-operation which is desperately needed for the betterment of human race. It gives pride and glory to all, doesn't discriminate between men, and creates openness and high respect for each individual, heritage, language and culture. It provides us with new eyes to view new world in its truest form which automatically endeavors capacity to judge oneself and others with the same glasses, on equal grounds where pride and prejudices are all vanished. This strength of multiculturalism can be seen in the diverse fields like trade, industry, commerce, politics, education and literary studies.

Multiculturalism is a social theory that plays a vital role in literary studies. It is not a single school of thought emerging from a single discipline. It has acquired wide range and scope in the fields of politics, sociology, anthropology and literary studies. It brings together different themes such as cultural diversity, recognition, mutual concern, peaceful co-existence of diverse cultures and subcultures. Multiculturalism is defined as:

"A contemporary movement in the United States based upon the assumption that traditional, mainstream culture has overlooked many of the literary contributions of ethnic and minority groups. . . In reference to literature, multiculturalists argue for the inclusion of ethnic and minority literature in the canon, the basic literary texts taught in schools and colleges" (Edward 12). In a broader sense, multiculturalism promotes the value of social heterogeneity, an essential part of human life, and respects minority cultures that have been marginalized for centuries. It opposes cultural imperialism or hegemony and respects all cultures with their distinctiveness, which is to say that it challenges the monoculture society and celebrates cultural pluralism. The coexistence of numerous cultures and subcultures can build up a healthy human society characterized by co-operation, tolerance, respect and love. Therefore, we can say that Indian society is a multicultural one, because multicultural bond is a strong bond of Indian heritage where various cultures and subcultures coexisted trustfully. The very meaning of 'Indianness' refers to the multicultural aspect and identity of India which is far beyond being a soul of India as a 'Nation'. India as a nation develops with multicultural society where each culture and subculture added new values and meanings. Lines of various cultures in India are become so thin that we cannot separate one culture from other or as culture and subculture.

The term 'Indian writing in English' itself is a multicultural and cross cultural one. It deals with the Indian authors who as being Indians have true insights of various cultures, subcultures, ethnic groups, age groups, gender groups at their back because India's societal fabric is multilayered, multifaceted and multicultural one. And when these authors write in English canvas of their experience became bigger one as they write here for readers and experiences of home and abroad. That's why as being mirror of society Indian literature in general and Indian writing in English in particular reflects multicultural arena of India's traditional glory. In this way post-colonial Indian writers with their keen experiences in India and abroad are authentic sources of multiculturalism in the globalised, post-modern, cosmopolitan world. Their multiculturalism reflected in their works, texts is a unique treat for a researcher to enjoy. I have chosen few of them here for my study which will aim at analyzing selected novels in the light of the importance of multiculturalism; a social philosophy which helps in respecting cultural diversity and peaceful co-existence of different cultures and subcultures in the multicultural world.

The present research will explore and analyze the select novels of the chosen authors Hari Kunzru, Amit Chaudhuri and Upamanyu Chatterjee. These writers have many novels to their credit as they are writing fictions since 1990's. Therefore; among all their fictions I will choose

only two novels of each author and focus on each and every thread of cross cultural and multicultural issue in their fiction with its promotion & violation. Hari Kunzru (born 1969), a British Indian novelist and journalist with his two well received and neatly fabricated fictions namely *The Impressionist* (2003) and *Transmission* (2005) are my concern for research. Besides these two novels he has written several other fictions like *Noise* (2005), *My Revolutions* (2007), *Gods without Men* (2011), *Memory Palace* (2013), *Twice Upon a Time: Listening to New York* (2014). *The Impressionist* focuses on the significance of multiculturalism as an individual experience. The setting is the vast scope of the British Empire and it recounts the story of Pran/Jonathan having different cultural experience. *Transmission* deals with internet era from 1990-2005 and story of Arjun and Guy Swift supporting each other even after being culturally different but globally one in this internet era. Hence, the two chosen novels deal with every sense of multicultural and cross cultural issues through their subject-matter, language, characters and so on and actually fulfills my purpose and study of promotion and violation of multiculturalism.

Amit Chaudhuri (born 1962), is an Indian English author and academic. He has many novels such as *A Strange and Sublime address* (1991), *Afternoon Raag* (1993), *Freedom Song* (1998), *A New World* (2000), *The Immortals* (2009) to his credit. Among these novels, I have chosen *Afternoon Raag* (1993) *and Freedom Song* (1998) for my research as these two through their narrative, story and character deals with multiculturalism and cross cultural issues and focuses on promotion and violation of it. *Afternoon Raag* set in Oxford, Bombay and Calcutta deals with cultural diversity through protagonist's journey from various places and experiences. The description of Indian music scores extra point for narrative technique. *Freedom Song* set in Calcutta in 1993 during the turbulent times of the Hindu-Muslim riots after the Babri-Masjid episode is an account of two families and their search for a bride for one of the characters.

Upamanyu Chatterjee (born 1959), is an Indian civil servant and a published author. He has published five novels namely *English, August: an Indian story* (1988), *The Last Burden* (1993), *The Mammaries of the Welfare State* (2000), *Weight Loss* (2006) *and Way to Go* (2011). Among these five novels I have chosen *English, August: and Indian Story* (1988) and *The Last Burden* (1993) for the present research. *English, August* is Agastya Sen's story who leaves his middle-class urban Delhi environment to join the Indian Administrative Service where he enters the near-foreign terrain of rural life in Madna. The story is about a particular generation of young, cosmopolitan Indian alienated from mainstream India and unsure as to where it would be going after having known various cultural diversities in India. *The Last Burden* explores the theme of alienation through dynamics of a family reunion in the contemporary Indian middle class. It portrays the cultural diversity of joint and nuclear family and its reunion as a reunion of traditional and modern India and its multicultural glory. These two novels of Chatterjee particularly deals with Indian society and its cultural diversity and author and its characters cross cultural and multicultural experiences in India as civil servant whereas novels of Kunzru and Chaudhuri depicts cosmopolitan, global and multiple cross cultural and multicultural experiences of author and its characters in India and abroad.

Statement of the Problem:

Themes of Indian fiction in English are numerous but the strong undercurrent of multiculturalism is clearly visible everywhere. It shows true picture of India as a country having 'unity in diversity'. The writers chosen here for the study are belonging to post-colonial world having exact senses for what they are serving in for their readers. Their fictions reveal socio-cultural realities of India as well as Europe and America as they deal with multifaceted social fabrics from these countries. Multiculturalism is a flexible social theory that keeps integrated world society in general and Indian society in particular as we are dealing with Indian authors only. The present study is not only an attempt perceive how different principles of multiculturalism are reflected in the selected novels but also to examine how the violation of the principles of multiculturalism has led to social friction, conflict and disharmony. Because multiculturalism believes in developing respect for each other, exchange of thought, ideas and information, sharing, communication for the peaceful harmonious coexistence of many cultures and subcultures.

Purpose of the Study:

The purpose of the present study is to discuss and analyze multicultural and multilingual realities in Indian Fiction in English as the world is becoming a multilingual, multiracial and multicultural global village. This study will analyze the selected novels in English by Hari Kunzru, Amit Chaudhuri and Upamanyu Chatterjee in the light of multicultural and multilingual identities of various cultures in Indian society. Their canvas becomes much wider as their diasporic experiences of several continents are added into it. The touch of post-colonial cosmopolitan thinking of authors also add extra flavor to multicultural angle of this study. Indian fiction in English is a rich source for collecting and analyzing an authentic data on multiculturalism as Indian scenario provides background for the literature which is varied and colorful. The most dominant trait of this scenario is the coexistence of cultures and subcultures demanding their rights, respect and recognition. The study will highlight the multicultural and multilingual identity of Indian society and adopt multiculturalism as one of the best solutions to establish peaceful society having multiple cultures and subcultures residing side by side. Therefore, the purpose of study is to analyze selected novels by above mention as well as recognition of multiculturalism, a social theory having call for social harmony and peace by respecting cultural diversity.

Review of the literature:

Multiculturalism has acquired a wide scope in the fields like history, politics, sociology, anthropology and literary studies. A lot of work is done in the areas of political and social sciences. The arguments for and against multiculturalism were examined in different context by different sociolo0gists and political thinkers. And the focus of their debate was on the issues like

minority rights, education, religious tolerance and the trend to homogenization. But there is a lot of scope in literary studies to focus multiculturalism as a solution for multiple conflicts and problems in Indian society in particular and world society in general because it focuses on the peaceful harmonious coexistence and co-operating that can lead glorious cultural tradition of India.

Hypothesis:

Indian fiction in English exhibits a socio-cultural reality of India, a land of multicultural, multiracial and multiethnic veracity. It reflects diffusion, profusion and confusion of cultural attitudes. Though India is a land of 'unity in diversity' we must focus on the need of harmonious coexistence of various cultures and subcultures having different views and ways of life. Any Indian fiction displays more or less different layers of Indian society, an amalgamation of multiple cultures and exposes social reality. This exposure should not be limited only to understand and analyze literary text and human society but should go beyond and appreciate the value and true meaning of peaceful co-existence and co-operation. Because man as being social animal has a capacity on the basis of mutual respect, understanding and love. Multiculturalism is a social philosophy which can help man in this because it promotes the value of tolerance, harmonious coexistence, non-discrimination and recognition of minority cultures. It reduces bias and prejudices and establishes love and care with true understanding of all human beings in the world irrespective of their different cultures and subcultures. Therefore, Indian fiction in English needs to be analyzed and studied for the purpose of promoting the value of multiculturalism which respects cultural diversity, recognizes the value of harmonious coexistence and enriches our lives.

Methods and Procedures:

The present study will cover a close examination of the theory of multiculturalism and its various facets. After having sufficient amount of knowledge and awareness concerning the theory of multiculturalism, an attempt will be made to go through different reference books, journals and magazines related to the selected novels. The selected novels will be examined and analyzed in the light of visible and invisible cultural diversity, peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups, cultures, religions, languages and heritage. However, some of the significant extracts or examples from the selected novels will be selected for the application of the principles of multiculturalism. The selected extracts or examples will be analyzed in the light of cultural diversity, assimilation, diffusion, acceptance, respect, mutual understanding and recognition of different cultures and subcultures for promoting the value of multiculturalism in literary studies.

Scope and Limitation:

It is necessary to limit the scope of the present study as a single literary falls short to cover the whole panorama of human society. Therefore, this study will scrutinize the selected

novels in the light of promoting the value of multiculturalism. A literary text can be analyzed and interpreted from different perspectives, but in the present study, an attempt will be made to restrict the interpretation within in the limit of promotion and violation of the principles of multiculturalism. In the selected novels, all the principles of multiculturalism may not be promoted or fully violated, but an attempt will be made to see and find out the authentic reasons of promotion and violation of the principles of multiculturalism. Though there are many dimensions of the term 'culture', in the present study culture is considered and interpreted from sociological point of view.

Aims and objectives:

1) The study primarily try to understand and explain multiculturalism in Indian social context and secondarily apply it to the selected novels by deliberate selection of certain passages, extracts, events, conversations from the novels having their focus on the promotion and violation of multiculturalism.

2) The study will try to understand and analyze the role of multiculturalism in the scenario of Indian fiction in English by selecting certain real life experiences of given authors who are responsible for their psyche and up bringing as an authentic speakers on the selected issue.

3) It will try to peace multiculturalism in canvas of postmodern, post-colonial, cosmopolitan writers and their writings.

4) The study will try to analyze and appreciate selected novels as representatives of social theory of multiculturalism dealing with cultural displacements, detachments and insecurities in postcolonial world at their truest sense.

5) It will try to focus on the problems and solutions aroused out of promotion and violation of multiculturalism in the selected novels.

6) The study will try to discuss multiculturalism with all its dimensions on the global platform by choosing these diasporic authors and will strongly promote its need for peaceful coexistence and co-operation of human race.

Significance of the study:

The present study is significant for the discussion and analyzation of multicultural realities reflected in the selected novels by the authors of Indian writing in English. In the 21st century, the world is becoming a multilingual and multicultural global village. Every country in the world has cultural diversity which reflects in its literary texts. Multiculturalism is not an intellectual discipline but a movement for social change. It is about respect, recognition tolerance and protection to all cultures and subcultures. Though there are many dimensions of the term 'culture', in present study, culture is treated as a social entity which encompasses race, religion, ethnicity and language, some of the basic sources of cultural diversity. Today's world scenario is

a perfect place to put this issue as exact solution for problems of violence and growing hatred for others on various basis. Multiculturalism should get highest value to create and establish the world of peace and harmony for the generations to come. The study is significant for generating values of liberty, fraternity and equality for the protection of human race, world heritage and multiplicity.

Tentative Chapterization:

Chapter -1-Theoretical framework

Chapter -2-Multiculturalism in the selected novels of Hari Kunzru

Chapter -3- Multiculturalism in the selected novels of Amit Chaudhuri

Chapter -4-Multiculturalism in the selected novels of Upamanyu Chatterjee

Chapter -5-Conclusion

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